

Health and Nutrition Assessment Handbook

Participant-Centered Nutrition Education and Goals

Participant-Centered Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is the foundation of the WIC program. Through education, participants learn about a healthy diet, budgeting food dollars, the importance of health and dental care, and how to make positive changes for the benefit of their families. Participant-centered education in WIC puts the concerns, needs, questions, and goals of the participant at the heart of the education process. Using anthropometric and hemoglobin data, as well as diet information, the CPA or Nutritionist should begin a conversation with the participant's or caregiver to determine what topics are most important. The CPA or Nutritionist should explain risk factors and their impact on health. A circle chart can be helpful to identify and clarify topics for education, and for goal setting. After determining education priorities, the CPA or Nutritionist should provide targeted information to the participant to improve their understanding and to facilitate positive behavior change. Handouts and demonstrations should be chosen to clarify and reinforce education messages.

Missouri WIC provides several tools to assist CPAs and Nutritionists in developing their skills in participant-centered education, as well as gaining the basic nutrition knowledge needed to provide accurate education:

- [Nutrition Training Manual](#)
- [WOM Policy ER# 2.06400 Effective Nutrition Education: Standards, Participant-Centered Goals, Delivery Methods and Documentation](#)
- [Missouri WIC Circle Chart](#)
- [USDA policy memo on WIC Nutrition Education Guidance](#)

Goal Setting

During each certification/recertification period participants must set a goal to improve their nutrition and/or health. A goal is about the final impact or outcome the WIC participant wants to accomplish. A well phrased goal is one that is clear, measurable, and includes a timeframe for completion. Often a goal includes a statement, 'from (measurement indices) to (measurement indices) by (specific date)'. Goals may relate to participant's risk factors, dietary habits, or health and dental care. Other nutrition or health topics may be appropriate when suggested by the participant.

A WIC Nutritionist or CPA should not set goals for the participant; however, they may act as guides in the goal setting process and assist the participant by asking open-ended questions and using affirming statements during assessment and counseling. The CPA or Nutritionist can be a partner in transforming a participant's idea for improvement into a measurable goal with a timeframe for completion.

Documentation

Specifics about all goals set by the participant during a certification period shall be documented in MOWINS using a general or SOAP note and should include at minimum:

- Behavior or topic targeted for change. Examples include fruit/vegetable intake, smoking, breastfeeding, obtaining routine health care, obtaining dental care.
- Action to be taken. Examples include increase, decrease, begin, maintain, quit, discontinue.
- Measurement of change that can realistically be expected. Examples include number of food servings, number of cigarettes, number of bottle feedings, or duration of breastfeeding.
- Time frame for expected completion of the goal. This may include a specific date or a time in relation to the participant's certification. For example, "before the next recertification," or "before the next visit," or "by 18 months of age," or by May 1, 2013."

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Follow-up

Remember that follow-up is a required component of WIC value enhanced nutrition assessment (VENA) services. Follow-up should be provided to find out how the participant has addressed a nutrition or health issue, but should not replace a nutrition education contact. A CPA or Nutritionist is required to follow-up on goals to determine participant progress no later than the certification/recertification visit following goal setting. Goal follow-up must be recorded in MOWINS using a general or SOAP note and should include current status of the goal. For example, a note stating "Goal met" or "Participant reports consuming 3 vegetables daily" would be acceptable documentation of goal follow-up.

SMART Process

A process for setting goals uses the SMART acronym: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. This process is recommended when writing participant-centered goals, however it is not mandatory.

<p style="text-align: center;">S Specific</p>	<p>A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. Provide enough detail so that there is no indecision as to what the participant activities are to complete this goal.</p> <p>An example of a general goal would be, "<i>Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.</i>" But a specific goal would say, "<i>By the end of next week, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day.</i>"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">M Measurable</p>	<p>The participant should choose a goal with measurable progress, so the participant can see the change as it occurs. A measurable goal has an outcome that can be assessed either on a sliding scale (1-10), or as a hit or miss, success or failure.</p> <p>Based on our example, "<i>By the end of next week, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day</i>" would be a measurable goal because we are measuring if the participant consumed fruits and vegetables one meal per day.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A Attainable/Achievable</p>	<p>An achievable goal has an outcome that is realistic given the participant's current social, economic, or cultural resources and time available. Goal achievement may be more of a stretch if the outcome is difficult to begin with.</p> <p>Our example of a goal was "<i>By the end of next week, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day.</i>"</p> <p>Is consuming a serving of fruits and vegetables one meal a day possible for the participant? If not, then this would not be an attainable goal.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">R Realistic</p>	<p>Start small so the participant can experience the joy of meeting their goal. Gradually increase the intensity of the goal after having a discussion with the participant, parent or caretaker to redefine the goal.</p> <p>Is our example goal "<i>By the end of next week, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day</i>" realistic for a WIC participant's food budget? If not, then we might want to redefine the goal with</p>

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	the participant's assistance.
T Time Bound	<p>Set a timeframe for the goal: for next week, in three months, by six months.</p> <p>In our example <i>"By the end of next week, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by including a serving at one meal per day,"</i> setting an end point for the goal gives the participant a clear target to achieve.</p>